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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0071
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0241
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0173
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 2649

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 000149

SIPDIS

DEA HQS FOR OC, OE, OGE
ANKARA FOR DEA/DESTITO
ISLAMABAD FOR DEA/DUDLEY
KABUL FOR DEA/MARSAC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/3/2020

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SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER - THAT'S NOT MY ANTI-AMERICAN SCREED

CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Ambassador, EXEC, DoS.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (c), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Following the issuance of a pamphlet claiming that the United States Government intentionally supported the narcotics industry in Afghanistan during the 1980s to destroy the Soviet Union, the Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD) told Ambassador that the pamphlet was unauthorized and did not reflect MVD views. He conveyed his view of events last summer in Tavildara, and said training provided by the United States was essential in defeating the insurgent incursion there. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ambassador called on Minister of Interior Abdurrahim Kaharov on February 2 to raise concerns about a recently issued MVD pamphlet. MVD officers distributed the pamphlet, which described the history of the MVD's counternarcotics unit, at a unit fifteenth anniversary event on December 26, 2009, attended by Embassy officers and the Minister of Interior. The pamphlet said that Afghans began producing opium poppy after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the behest of the USG. Americans profited from this business, and the USG wished to destroy Persian, Islamic, and Soviet societies through drug addiction. In this effort, the pamphlet said, the United States succeeded.

¶3. (C) Embassy Drug Enforcement Administration officers met with the commander of the MVD narcotics unit on January 26 to raise their concerns about the allegations in the pamphlet. They were treated to an angry tirade from the unit chief, who defended the allegations, claimed they were true because they could be found on the Internet, said the USG had in fact done much worse than the allegations in question, and insulted emboffs and the Ambassador. The Drug Enforcement Administration officers walked out of the meeting.

¶4. (C) In the February 2 meeting, Minister of Interior Kaharov said he had not authorized the issuance of the pamphlet and had not vetted it. He apologized for its content, and said his staff had told him there might be a problem with the pamphlet, but he had not had time yet to examine the issue. He assured Ambassador that the MVD would cease distribution of the pamphlet (which numbered 1,000 copies), and might print a retraction. Ambassador thanked him for his attention to this matter, noting the importance of U.S.-MVD cooperation on counternarcotics and the size of USG support to the MVD (\$1.7 million annually).

HIS VERSION OF TAVILDARA EVENTS

15. (C) Kaharov also spoke at length about the importance of U.S. support to the MVD and credited U.S.-provided Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) training and equipment with enabling the MVD to defeat an insurgent group in Tavildara district in summer 2009. He said the origin of the Tavildara events was the attempt by Mirzo Ziyoev (former opposition commander, then Emergency Situations Committee Chairman in the post civil war government) and "his associate" Ne'mat Azizov to establish a transport channel with Pakistan using members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Ten Russian citizens of Dagestani, Korean, and Russian ethnicity joined them from Saint Petersburg and tried quite seriously to destabilize Tajikistan. After sporadically successful MVD attempts to track the group, the militants, numbering 50-70 men, eventually "came out of the forest" and attacked the town of Tavildara. MVD forces had taken position around the town and the surrounding heights and drove them off. After another month of tracking the group, the MVD surrounded and destroyed it; only two militants escaped.

16. (C) Kaharov said a critical element of the government's success was the support of the local population, who were tired of foreign fighters and war. MVD troops operated under strict instructions not to take any supplies from the locals nor abuse them in any way. In response to Ambassador's question, Kaharov said he believed the incursion was not a probe to test government reactions, but was a serious attempt to destabilize

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Tajikistan.

17. (C) Comment: Old Soviet and more recent Russian propaganda against the United States influence individual officials in Tajikistan. This incident highlights the public diplomacy challenge we face in defending U.S. interests here. Kaharov's comments on Tavildara also show the benefits to local and regional stability of our ATA training in Tajikistan and the Tajiks' strong interest in getting more such training. End Comment.
GROSS